

Lorraine Lavender, CTC 2/2004

STUDENT VOICES

"Youth and Elders Intergenerational Dialogue"

Newark Student Voices is a part of the National Student Voices Project, an initiative of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. In Newark, the project involves the participation of classes at 14 Newark high schools. Student Voices is being sponsored locally by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

At the request of these young people, Seniors from various parts of the city, attended a seminar to answer questions posed to them regarding specific public problems they had selected. The Seniors were requested to discuss these problems and advise the students on how to speak out about these issues and what actions to take to solve them. The students also wanted to explore how each generation can play a role in improving their communities.

The specific areas of concern were housing, jobs, gangs, drugs, politics, and relationships. Questions about these areas were (1) Approaches to Consider; (2) Pitfalls to Avoid; (3) Methods to Communicate to Our Community.

What was so amazing to the Seniors was how serious these young people were about getting answers to their questions from city officials. Although they had requested that the Mayor meet

Page #2- L. Lavender
Newark Student Voices
Y/EID

with them to discuss their concerns regarding these problems, they did not even get a response. These young people are our future and no one should be too busy to at least hear what they have to say. Believe me they had a lot to say.

Young people are thirsty for information regarding the state of the communities in which they live. Lack of affordable housing, gangs, jobs, drugs, the way the city is being run and so many other serious concerns.

The Seniors discussed how they can be influential in restoring order in their communities and areas where they can make immense improvements in what happens. What young people need is someone to listen to them. The old adage that "children should be seen and not heard" is definitely out of date.

It will take much more dialogue between the participating groups to shepherd our young people through the steps needed to make the changes that they see are needed. This avenue that has been opened up should not be left untraveled. Commitments have been made to see that our young people have the support that they need to make this journey. You can help. They meet

Page #3

NSV

Y/EID

L. Lavender

every Thursday at 4:30 p.m. in the Robeson Hall at Rutgers U.

You don't need an invitation, just drop in! You will be rewarded with a most sincere welcome. See you there.

#30